

IN THE CLAIMS

1-24 (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a voice call at a mobile device having a first speaker and a second speaker, the first speaker for use in a handset mode of operation in which the mobile device is placed in close proximity to a user's ear and the second speaker for use in a handsfree mode of operation, the second speaker capable of generating a larger acoustic output signal than the first speaker, comprising:

storing a safe volume profile at the mobile device associated with the handsfree mode of operation, the safe volume profile providing a default volume setting for the second speaker which is selected to reduce the risk of damage to a user's hearing if the mobile device is operated in close proximity to the user's ear while in the handsfree mode of operation, wherein the handsfree mode of operation is a mode for listening to the voice call while holding the mobile device away from the user's ear;

answering an incoming call with the mobile device in the handset mode of operation according to a regular volume profile that is higher than the default volume setting of the safe volume profile;

switching the mobile device from the handset mode of operation to the handsfree mode of operation while processing the incoming call; and

operating the mobile device in the handsfree mode of operation according to the safe volume profile so as to protect the hearing of the mobile device user in case the mobile device is still held in close proximity to the user's ear when the mobile device transitions from the handset mode of operation to the handsfree mode of operation.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, further comprising disabling adjustment of the volume level from the default volume setting of the safe volume profile for a predetermined time period after the user has switched the mobile device from the handset mode of operation to the handsfree mode of operation.

27-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, further comprising:

defining a maximum safe volume in the safe volume profile; and
preventing adjustment of the volume level from the default volume setting to a volume level that exceeds the maximum safe volume when in the handsfree mode of operation.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, further comprising:

switching the mobile device from the handsfree mode of operation back to the handset mode of operation while processing the incoming call; and
operating the mobile device in the handset mode of operation according to the regular volume profile.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, further comprising:

prior to answering the incoming call with the mobile device, enabling a notification on the mobile device indicating the receiving of the incoming call.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, further comprising:

determining whether to answer the incoming call in response to the notification; and

if the incoming call is not to be answered, then redirecting the voice call to a voicemail system associated with the mobile device.

33. (Currently Amended) A mobile device having a first speaker and a second speaker, the first speaker for use in a handset mode of operation in which the mobile device is ~~plae~~ placed in close proximity to a user's ear and the second speaker for use in a handsfree mode of operation in which the mobile device is held away from the user's ear, the second speaker capable of generating a larger acoustic output signal than the first speaker, comprising:

a memory for storing a safe volume profile associated with the handsfree mode of operation, the safe volume profile providing a default volume setting selected to reduce the risk of damage to a user's hearing if the second speaker is operated in close proximity to the user's ear while in the handsfree mode of operation;

a transceiver for receiving and answering an incoming call;

a mode control system for selecting the handset mode of operation to process the incoming call, the handset mode of operation having an associated regular volume profile that is higher than the default volume setting of the safe volume profile;

the mode control system further comprising means for switching the mobile device from the handset mode of operation to the handsfree mode of operation while processing the incoming call and means for operating the mobile device in the handsfree mode of operation according to the safe volume profile so as to protect the hearing of the mobile device user in case the mobile device is still held in close proximity to the user's ear when the mobile device transitions from the handset mode of operation to the handsfree mode of operation.

34. (Previously Presented) The mobile device of claim 33, further comprising a volume control system for disabling adjustment of the volume level from the default volume setting of the safe volume profile for a predetermined time period after the user has switched the mobile device from the handset mode of operation to the handsfree mode of operation.

35-36. (Cancelled)

37. (Previously Presented) The mobile device of claim 33, further comprising:

a volume control system for defining a maximum safe volume in the safe volume profile and for preventing adjustment of the volume level from the default volume setting to a volume level that exceeds the maximum safe volume when in the handsfree mode of operation.

38. (Previously Presented) The mobile device of claim 33, wherein the mode control system further comprises:

means for switching the mobile device from the handsfree mode of operation back to the handset mode of operation while processing the incoming call; and

means for operating the mobile device in the handset mode of operation according to the regular volume profile.

39. (Previously Presented) The mobile device of claim 33, further comprising:

a notification trigger system on the mobile device for notifying the user of a received voice call prior to answering the voice call.

40. (Previously Presented) The mobile device of claim 39, further comprising:

means for determining whether to answer the incoming call in response to the notification;
and

means, responsive to the determining means, for redirecting the voice call to a voicemail system associated with the mobile device.

41. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a voice call by a mobile device that is configured to operate in handset mode in which the mobile device is placed against a user's ear and in handsfree mode in which the mobile device is held away from the user's ear, the method comprising:

initially limiting the volume, to a preset initial level when the mobile device is manually switched from the handset mode to the handsfree mode, to a preset initial level, so as to protect the hearing of the mobile device user in case the mobile device is still held in close proximity to the user's ear when the mobile device transitions from the handset mode to the handsfree mode; and

enabling the user to raise the volume, while remaining in handsfree mode and after the volume has been initiated at the preset initial level, to a level higher than the preset initial level.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the enabling step includes:

enabling the user to raise the volume, while remaining in handsfree mode and only after the volume has remained at the preset initial level for a finite time period, to a level higher than the preset initial level.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42 wherein the finite length of time is about a few seconds.

44. (Cancelled)

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 further comprising:

emitting the voice call from a first speaker when in handset mode and emitting the sound from a second speaker when in handsfree mode.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the initially limiting step includes:

initially limiting the volume, when the mobile device is switched from handset mode to handsfree mode in the middle of a conversation.